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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY East Germany

SUBJECT Delivery of Hydrogenation Contacts and Contact Ovens Manufactured in East Germany to the USSR

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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

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1. The SAG Brikett Schwarzheide plant has been delivering cobalt-thorium contacts for use as catalysts in the Fischer-Tropsch hydrogenation process to the USSR since the spring of 1952. The contacts, which are on a kieselguhr carrier substance, are shipped in iron containers, usually one contact per container. The containers, which have a total height of about 2.5 meters, are cylinder-shaped in the middle with a conical extension at each end. One container weighs eight tons when filled. Each contact oven uses one contact. The contacts are shipped by rail from Schwarzheide to Russia via Frankfurt/Oder. On the average, eight contacts are shipped to the USSR each month.

2. In 1952 about 60 contact ovens obtained from the scrapping of the hydrogenation installation at the Luetzkendorf plant were shipped to Russia. In 1952 the SAG Transmasch Rudisleben plant received an order for the delivery of 83 contact ovens to Russia in 1953. In order to fill the order, an unidentified number of large halls for the fabrication of the ovens were constructed at Rudisleben. Two 15-ton cranes were installed in the assembly hall.

3. A contact oven is about 2.5 meters high, 3.5 meters long and 1.5 to 1.8 meters wide. The distance between the lamellae inside the oven is six millimeters. The ovens being built for Russia at Rudisleben have essentially the same characteristics as those now in use at the Schwarzheide plant, except that they are for a pressure of up to 40 atu, whereas the Schwarzheide ovens are for a maximal pressure of 20 atu. The fact that the Russian ovens are for a higher pressure seems to indicate that they are to be used for other than cobalt-thorium contacts - for iron contacts, for instance.

4. German personnel at Schwarzheide deduced from the shipments of contacts to Russia and from the order to build contact ovens for the USSR that a Fischer-Tropsch hydrogenation plant is in operation in Russia. This German personnel further believesthat the installation is located in the Moscow coal basin; this belief, however, is based only on the fact that there are lignite deposits available in that area. It is also believed that the Russian installation is headed by Chief Engineer Makarov (fnu).

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who was with the Schwarzheide plant until 1947, at which time he was recalled to Russia, allegedly to supervise the construction of a Russian Fischer-Tropsch hydrogenation plant. Because none of the contacts sent to Russia has been returned to Schwarzheide for regeneration, it has been concluded that the Russian hydrogenation plant includes a contact regeneration works.